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By ___, NARA, Date 6-8-93

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

INFORMATION

HARVAN DOUBLE PLUS

Put on My Desk

Wednesday, November 13, 1968

Rec'd 11:00a

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Secretary Clifford's Press Conference

I would suspect that Thieu would feel that Secretary Clifford overstated the case that Thieu was kept "fully informed" and "fully posted". It is true that Thieu was told what he needed to know when he needed to know it, but he was not informed of the details of the private conversations. Nor was he informed of each conversation.

Timing. Secretary's account of the sequence of events is correct:

-- Thieu's first response on October 29 was that November 2 was too soon. He also said he had to talk to Ky. (Tab A -- Saigon 41436)

This word was received in Washington -- initially by phone -- after the 2:30 a.m. meeting broke up but before all of the participants had returned to their offices. (Clifford says "later that day".)

-- Thieu's opposition was later expanded to 4 points (Clifford says some 4 or 5 points). Bunker reported by phone at 2:00 p.m. EST the 29th. (Tab B) (3:00 a.m., 30th Saigon time). Clifford gives the time as "the next day, Wednesday". (Bunker dispatched the message account at 3:10 p.m. EST -- Tab C)

Consultation with Candidates. The Secretary correctly stated that difficulties with Saigon had been explained to the candidates jointly on October 31 by phone before the announcement of the bombing halt was made public. He probably left the impression that more of the details were given to the candidates than was actually the case.

-- The transcript of the conversation with the candidates referred to some minor problems which had developed in the period from October 16 to October 31.

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Referring to surreptitious overtures to the South Vietnamese, the following comment was made by the President: "I don't know just what will come out of that situation."

-- Further referencing Saigon's allegation that it would not have time to get a delegation to Paris, the transcript contains the following sentence: "We would hope that the Government of Vietnam would have time to get their men there" by November 6. (Transcript of President's conversation with the candidates is attached as Tab D.)

W. W. Rostow

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